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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

25X1A

COUNTRY Taiwan

SUBJECT Comments on Medical Research, Education and Personalities

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DATE (OF INFO.)

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DATE DISTR. 16 MAR 54

NO. OF PAGES 3

NO. OF ENCLS.

SUPP. TO
REPORT NO.

I can say, however, that there is a good deal, much of it having direct bearing on local medical problems. I was able to note at the Taiwan University Medical School that research was being done in parasitic diseases, nutritional problems and in antibiotic therapy of infectious diseases. Of course, I do not mention here the work in Public Health, malaria and VD control being carried on by such international organizations as WHO. Dr. Hsu, professor of zoology in the university, although not in the medical school, is doing good work in parasitology. An intelligent man, Shu is well known in the US. Researchers have plenty of laboratory space, but their equipment is old and their budget small. I believe MSA funds for reconstruction and modernization are becoming available, and already modern X-ray equipment is being installed. MSA money is also being used to construct or modernize dormitories, and to centralize the medical school's library facilities.

2. I associated constantly with Chinese doctors, both those engaged in medical education and those in practice, and I formed a good opinion of their backgrounds and capabilities. During my stay in Taipei I attended the three-day annual meeting of the Taiwan Medical Association, and in following the program I was impressed favorably with the modern techniques employed in practice and research. Use of such drugs as ACTH in treatments is as advanced as it is in this country. In fact the program of the meeting could easily have been that of a similar assembly in the US.
3. The chief difficulties facing medical education and research in Taiwan today are, in my opinion, antiquated facilities and a lean budget. In the matter of facilities the medical school was erected 50 or 60 years ago by the Japanese, on a plan similar to German institutions of that era, and today, although affording ample space for most programs, it is hopelessly obsolete. I was able

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to move the Department of Pathology from the Medical School to the Taita Hospital where more modern laboratories are available. The exterior of the medical school is impressive but gives a false idea of its facilities. Some of the faculty would like to sell the present school, which is in the center of Taipei on very valuable land, and erect new buildings, but I fear such a project has no chance of success. The other difficulty is budgetary, and most professors are underpaid even by their standards. The best paid professors receive salaries of not more than US\$35 or US\$50 a month, plus their rice rations, and only a few are given houses. Many assistant professors and instructors are forced, by lack of money, to sleep in their laboratories on Japanese cots. Whenever possible these men obtain part-time jobs outside to eke out their meager incomes.

4. All medicine in Taiwan is socialized, whether controlled by the Nationalist or Provincial governments, as far as hospitals and education are concerned. The provincial government operates between 20 and 25 hospitals scattered throughout the island, and also a number of health centers or clinics, and all medical personnel at these facilities come under the civil service. Many of the doctors supplement their inadequate pay with off-hours private practice. There is also a system of private practice quite apart from the government program, and many of the poorer natives still depend on the services of quack doctors and their cure-all medications.
5. Despite the difficulties confronting them the doctors in Taiwan, in practice and in medical education, are by no means a backward group. Their approach to their problems is quite modern, due largely to the fact that many of them are influenced by US medical thought. Most of the heads of departments have studied at least one year in the US on fellowships received through various agencies, while many of the younger doctors have received a greater part of their medical education in this country. Those who have not been educated in the US are graduates of the best medical schools in Mainland China and their thinking is likewise almost entirely directed to the US. As examples of this latter group I can mention Lieutenant General Lu*, head of the National Defense Medical Center, an able physiologist, and Dr. O. K. Kaw, his assistant and a competent bacteriologist. The Dean of the Medical School is currently doing work in the US. Probably the most powerful medical man in Taiwan today is Dr. J. Heng Liu, Chairman of the Committee for coordinating all medical work in the island. All medical activity is passed on by this committee, composed of representatives from the National Defense Medical Center, the University Medical School, the Nationalist and Provincial Health Ministers, and MSA. Dr. Liu who is also head of the Taiwan Red Cross, is about 60 years of age and a graduate of Peking Union and Harvard Medical Schools. Although a blustering, domineering man with a good opinion of himself he is basically critical and sound in his ideas of medical education and practice, and if his methods are not always easy to follow he has the ability to see the points of view of others. He is a forward-looking man with a good business head. All the young doctors with whom I came into contact, if they had not been able to study in this country, were anxious to do so or at least to come under his medical influence. In addition to medical personnel many other leading men in Taiwan are influenced by US ideas, including the president of the university, who is a graduate of the University of Illinois.
6. Although Mainland Chinese dominate the field of medicine in Taiwan, a number of natives of the island hold important positions and since many of them were educated in Japan, they are oriented to Japanese thought and methods. The president of the university is from the Mainland and US-educated, but the Dean of the Medical School and the head of its Taita Hospital are both Taiwanese and received their educations in Japan. A similar balance between the two exists

*Lt. Gen. Lu Chih-kuo

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among the department heads of the medical school. There is a friendly personal relationship and cooperation between the two, but the Taiwanese openly want to be rid of the Mainlanders at the earliest possible moment. Although their basic culture is Chinese the Taiwanese lived under Japanese rule and order for so long that they have acquired the customs of their former masters and are for the most part still pro-Japanese. Also, to all of the natives the memory of the Chinese "re-conquest" after World War II with its record of brutality and mis-government is still very green. The Mainlanders themselves, while giving lip-service publicly to the government's slogans for a quick return home, in private admit their realization of the impossibility of this without a large degree of help from the outside. They are all anxious to return, but when or where? It is my belief that they have little hope of ever getting back.

7. Taiwan manufactures only the ordinary types of drugs and sera locally, and all the more modern antibiotics or wonder drugs have to be imported. Since there are tight money controls on all funds allotted for imports, there is much wire-pulling involved in purchasing drugs. In fact, there are periodic attempts to corner the market which causes prices to skyrocket. I believe, in view of this situation, that MSA will attempt to build up a reserve of imported antibiotics with which to combat future attempts at this racket.

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